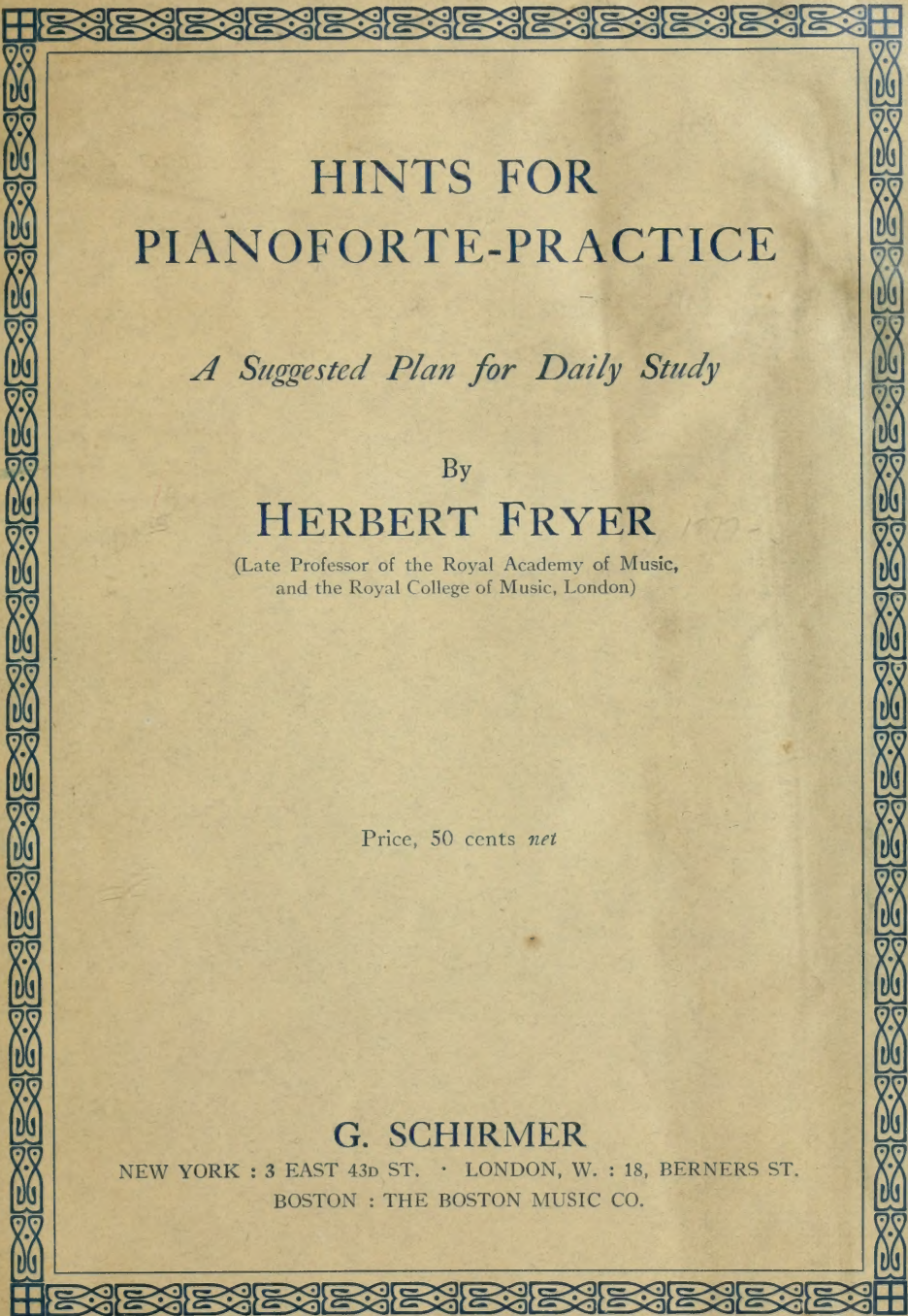


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HINTS FOR PIANOFORTE-PRACTICE

A Suggested Plan for Daily Study

By

HERBERT FRYER

(Late Professor of the Royal Academy of Music,
and the Royal College of Music, London)


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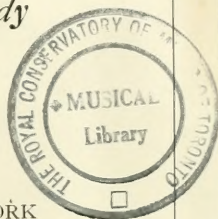
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HINTS FOR PIANOFORTE-PRACTICE

INTRODUCTORY

In a career of concert-playing and pianoforte-teaching extending over a number of years, it has frequently been borne in upon me that a definite plan of campaign for pianoforte students, in printed form, would be of great value both to students and pupils.

There are many valuable sets of studies, technical exercises, etc., of a most exhaustive kind, but it is often difficult to choose the best from these. It is hoped that the following ideas and suggestions may be found useful to those embarking on a course of pianoforte studentship; they may be supplemented by a larger variety as the student advances, and when careful and thoughtful habits of practice have been acquired. Although the present plan is

not in any way exhaustive in scope, the ideas contained therein have proved of the utmost value and assistance towards artistic development.

The main plan is as follows:

In preference to obtaining a merely superficial knowledge of exercises, scales, etc., in many keys, the author found it more economical, in time-saving, to take *one key each day* (major and minor), and work through as many varieties of technique as possible in the time portioned out to technical development. Let us take, for instance, the key of C; not as being, by any means, the easiest to play in, but as the simplest to read.

Most technical study, particularly in the earlier stages of serious work, *should be done with each hand separately*. The scales should eventually be played with both hands, not only an octave apart,

but also commencing at an interval of a third, sixth and tenth apart; this, however, only when a certain degree of sureness and efficiency has been attained.

Exercise I

C-major Scale. Compass of 4 Octaves.

(To be played in groups of 4 notes, and, when taken faster, in groups of 8 notes.)

N. B. At least one hour to an hour and a half (out of 3-4 hours' daily practice) should be spent in technical development.

*These lines indicate finger-groupings, and do *not* represent rhythmical divisions.

C-minor Scale.

R. H.

L. H.

The melodic form should be practised also:

Exercise II

C-major Scale. Compass of 3 Octaves.

(To be played in groups of 6 notes, divided into three 2's or two 3's.)

R. H.

L. H.

Two
Threes

Five

R. H.

L. H.

etc.

Melodic minor also.

VARIOUS WAYS OF PRACTISING

For tone-gradation (development of control in shading, coloring), and the cultivation of varieties of touch, the following experiments should be tried in connection with all exercises.

- a. For brilliance, practise with bent-finger attitude. (Firm finger-tips, and fingers lifted not uncomfortably high.)
- b. For sympathetic singing tone, with flat-finger attitude, not fast; *the idea being to transfer the weight of the hand or arm (according to speed and tone required) from key to key* (as the weight of the body from

leg to leg in walking), which is the essence of legato.

- c. Hand-Staccato (with hand-movements, not mere finger-movements).
- d. Finger-Staccato, for more delicate and quick staccato passages, taking care that the base of operations (the upper arm) is not rigid, but in a condition of relaxation.
- e. Crescendos and diminuendos of varying length should be constantly and most carefully practised.

pp ————— **p** ————— **pp**
pp ————— **mf** ————— **pp**
p or pp ————— **f** ————— **pp or p**

N. B. In brilliant passages (thrusting muscular touch) the faster the speed, the smaller should be the finger-movements; and at a great speed, the fingers should start from the key-surface.

In legato passages the fingers should feel for their key, *always*.

A Scale commencing *pp* to ascend to a *forte* and staccato, top note.

pp ————— **f**

Also ascending, crescendo and diminuendo:

pp ————— **f** ————— **pp**

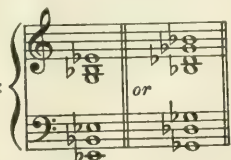
The inversions of exercises in *e* should also be practised.

1. *p* ————— *pp* ————— *f*
 2. *mf* ————— *pp* ————— *mf*
 3. *f* ————— *pp* ————— *f*
 4. *f* ————— *pp* ————— *pp* top note
f ————— *pp* ————— *f*
 (ascending)

N. B. It is most important to practise these gradations *whilst descending*, as well as ascending, the scales, etc.

f. To fix relative standards of tone-quality, the following is most useful:

Take any comfortably held chords,

for example:  and play them

as follows:

I Ia Ib
ppp pp p
 with soft pedal

2 3 4 5 6 7
pp piano mf forte ff fff
 tre corde

Soft pedal (for veiled, delicate effects) 1, 1a, 1b.

Without soft pedal, 2 to 7; the last (*fff*) exceptionally strong.

N. B. In passage-playing it is perhaps well to think of the loudest tone being *forte*, not *fortissimo*, the latter tending to exaggeration and much physical discomfort and muscular wrong-doing.

Always try to take a key vertically (that is, *be above it*) and thus avoid stretching, which stiffens the muscles and interrupts agility and all comfort in passage-work. This means wrist freedom, both lateral and rotary, without which no scale, arpeggio, or broken-chord passage, can be fluent and easy.


Exercise III

Chromatic Scale

R. H.
 a. 

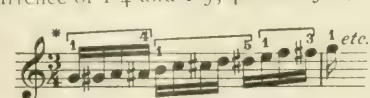
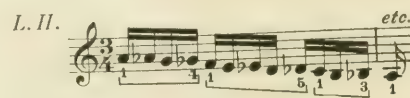
* To be extended to 2, 3 or 4 octaves in compass and practised in groups of 3 notes, 4 notes, 6 notes (three 2's and two 3's) and 8 notes.

Other useful fingerings are the following:

R. H.
 b. 

L. H.

(Notice that the thumb is used here on alternate white keys, and except *once* (in two octaves) is a recurrence of 1-4 and 1-3; 4-1 and 3-1.)

R. H.  L. H. 

*This is for passages of great velocity, and not so practical when descending in the R. H. and ascending in the L. H.

Exercise IV

Trill-Studies in Six Positions

All the following fingering should be practised:

R. H.—1212—1313—2323—2424 3434 3535
and

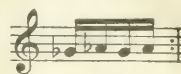
L. H.—also 1323—1324 (useful for long trill-figures, being less tiring).

A. 1st Position.



White keys

2d Position.

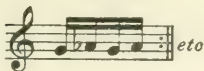


Black keys

Continue same figures.

3d Position.

Black key
above white
(semitone)



4th Position.

Black key
below white
(semitone)



5th Position.

Black key
above white
(whole tone)



6th Position.

Black key
below white
(whole tone)



Always practise rhythmical series, watching the beats, or guide-notes, and lengthening the trill with development and progress; for example:



(To be practised slowly and rather firmly, and also faster and more lightly as ability develops.)

N. B. *Beware of key-squeezing in trill-playing;* for unless the keys rebound, they will not be ready for use and all possibility of speed in the trill is denied.

and it should be often practised as such, even at a moderately slow tempo.

A trill is, therefore, a series of staccato tones,

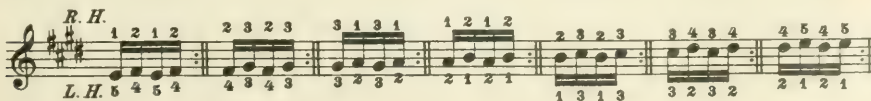
B. For eliminating any hindering downward-acting arm-force, practise the following, which was suggested by Julian Pascal's "Keyboard Exercises":



(The five fingers *resting on* the keys, *without depressing them*.)

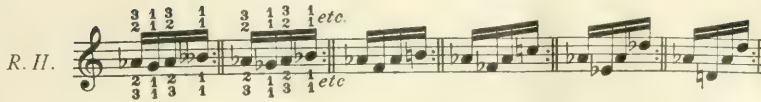
Also practise in groups of four and eight.

C. Trill-Exercises should be made out of the major and minor scales; for example, thus:



(Also in triplets.)

b.



(with Ab as the centre)

and back.

L.H. (an octave lower).

Exercise VI

The Arpeggio

a. (Major Triad.)

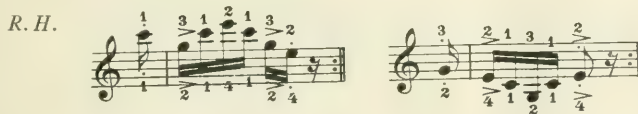


L.H. (an octave lower).

Sections for Practice (for ascending)



(for descending):



L.H. (an octave lower).

N. B. It is a good plan to *rest* on the first 16th-note, and take the accented note *easily* from it.

b. The Arpeggio. (Minor Triad.)



L.H. (an octave lower).

Sections for Practice

Ditto Va, but with the minor triad (Eb instead of E natural).

The first and second inversions must not be omitted.

Exercise VIII

Chord of the Diminished Seventh

a.

R. H.

L. H.



b.

R. H.

L. H.



Inversions

R. H.

L. H.



Sections (round the thumb) as in Ex. V.

Exercise IX

Octaves

These are hand-movements, either made (at a slow tempo) with conscious effort in each case, or (at a faster tempo) being a series of small rebounds, hand-shakes, vibratory movements (call them what you will) with a conscious *impetus-giving* hand (or forearm) movement at each beat.

Heavy octave-passages are played with the forearm movement, but these only at a moderate tempo.

N. B. The octave-stretch must be firm (*the hand to be in a condition that could be likened to hard rubber rather than to wood or steel*), but the wrists and elbow-joints must never be rigid.

Great care must be taken to avoid contraction of elbow-joint and all arm and shoulder muscles, the base of operations being the back (spinal) muscles.

Preparatory Exercises:

a.

R. H.



L. H. (octave lower)

(Also on a black key.)

N. B. Work well *with* the key, and *do not* leave it in the middle of a series of rebounds. It is

often a help, as a rhythmical guide, to raise the hand a little before the beat.

b.

R. H.



L. H. (octave lower).

Bouncing exercise (strong to weak).

Ditto (weak to strong).

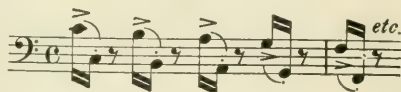
Broken Octaves

a.

R. H.



L.H.



b.

R. H. (to a staccato and accented note).



L.H.



c. (p and f)

R. H.



(p and f)

L.H.



Octaves (continued)

d. $f - p$

R. H.


$$p \leq f$$


e.

L.H. (octave lower).



f.

g. All these must also be reversed, and practised from the top of the scale downwards.

h. *The Scales, major and minor, should be practised (after the preparatory exercises) in rhythms of three, four and six notes, both*

legato and staccato, with each hand separately; later with both hands together.

i. *The Chromatic Scale should be played, both legato and staccato, compass of two octaves.*

a.

legato

R. H.

staccato

legato

L. H.

staccato



(two octaves lower).

b. The same descending.

R. H.

Also

L. H.

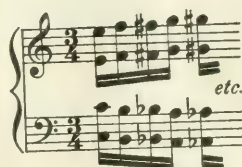


c. In contrary motion:

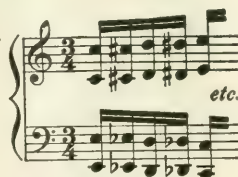
1.



2.



3.

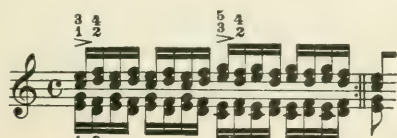


Exercise X

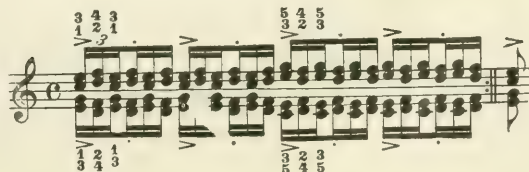
Double-Notes

Preparatory Exercises for Thirds:

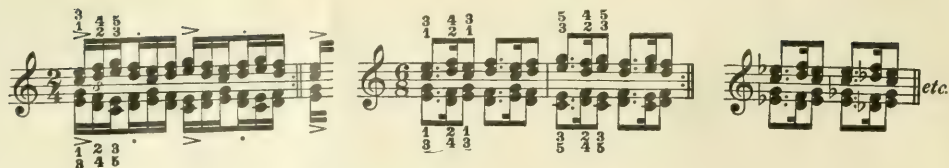
R. H.



L. H.



R. H.



L. H.

N. B. The same fingering to be used in all keys.
(Modulating to key higher).

a. Major Scale.

R. H.



L. H. (octave lower).

Another fingering:



N. B. Practise also in triplets and groups of six notes (three 2's).

b. Minor Scale.



c. Chromatic Minor Thirds.

R. H.

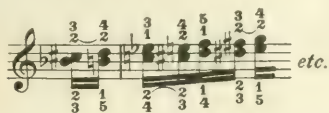


L. H.

* Practise this in varying rhythms and a compass of 2 and 3 octaves.

If continued higher, finger so:

R. H.



L.H.

N. B. The principle of this fingering is the sliding of the second finger from D♯ to E and from A♯ to B (ascending), and from D♭ to C and from G♭ to F (descending), thus avoiding the use of the thumb on consecutive white keys. The upper and lower fingering (in each hand) should be practised separately.

d. Sixths:

R. II.



L.H. (octave lower).



N. B. Avoid stretching as much as possible, rotary freedom of the wrists helping to carry the hand towards each chord, $\frac{1}{4} \rightarrow \frac{5}{2}$, etc.)

(To be continued in D \flat and through all the keys, on the same plan of modulation, i. e., major

triad, minor triad, and dominant triad—commencing on 1st inversion—of key a semitone higher.)

N. B. This exercise should also be extended to an octave higher, played in 9-16 time:



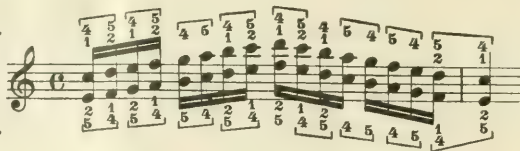
* These four specimens may be practised on any degree of the scale used, and with the same fingering.

To be played also with dotted notes, as in Example 4 under Double-Thirds.

R. H.

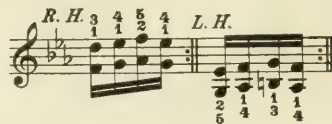
c. Major Scale:

L. H.



d. Minor Scale:

R. H.



L. H. (octave lower).

e. Chromatic Major Sixths:



Exercise XI

Scales in Contrary Motion

All scales and arpeggios, when thoroughly learned and mastered in similar motion, should be practised in contrary motion, commencing either from the centre of the keyboard or with the hands extended.

These should be practised at the interval of a third, a sixth, and an octave; also starting from same key.

For example:

Scales:







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